The problem of agricultural labour might well have been expected to defy solution. For years before the War the countryside had steadily been depopulated, and its landworkers reduced *labour problem* to a minimum. When the War broke out, there was a rush of village lads to the colours. The Army exercised a twofold suction upon farm workers. In the first place, these country-bred men included a much higher average of A category recruits than did the urban workers reared in the slummy and unhealthy back streets of our smoke-poisoned cities. So the military representatives cast covetous eyes on these sturdy sons of the soil, and took every opportunity to slip them into khaki. And in the second place, the wages earned by land-workers were so meagre that army pay, plus family allowance, had an attraction for them which it did not hold out to the well-paid munition worker or city employee. Moreover, the industry was not organised to counteract this allurement. Its workers were not combined in strong trade unions that would defend their members, and the farmers had no federation comparable in its strength to those of the great manufacturing industries. Whatever influence the Agricultural Labourers' Union or the National Farmers[5] Union may exercise over Governments to-day, in those days it was negligible.

Thus by 1917 there was far less than the normal

pre-War labour force available on the land. And with this decimated army we were proposing to carry out arable cultivation on a scale which had not been attempted for decades.

The thing seemed impossible. Nevertheless, it was achieved. The romance of that triumphant struggle against war and weather, and, not least, against the